

**REMARKS**

Claims 17, 19-21, 23, 25, 31, 33-35, 37, 39, 41, and 42 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicants amend the claims to better conform them with U.S. patent practice, and add new claims 41 and 42. Claims 13-16, 18, 22, 24, 26-30, 32, 36, 38, and 40 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

***Specification Objection***

The Specification is objected to as allegedly failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. In view of the amendment to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the Specification supports the claimed subject matter. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that *at least* FIG. 2 of the Applicants' drawings, and its corresponding description on page 10, line 23 to page 17, line 11 supports the claimed subject matter.

***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112***

Claims 13-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite. In view of the amendment to claims 17, 19-21, 23, 25, 31, 33-35, 37, 39, 41, and 42 , Applicants respectfully submit that these claims comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Since claims 13-16, 18, 22, 24, 26-30, 32, 36, 38, and 40 have been canceled, the rejection thereto is rendered moot.

***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103***

Claims 13-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,847,857 to Sugie. For *at least* the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that Sugie does not qualify as valid prior art under any subsection of 35 U.S.C. § 102. For example, Sugie's earliest effective filing date, December 9, 2003 falls after the earliest effective filing date of the instant application, which is March 28, 2003 (see MPEP § 1893.03(b)). Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is improper. Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

Further, since claims 13-16, 18, 22, 24, 26-30, 32, 36, 38, and 40 have been canceled, the rejection thereto is rendered moot.

***New claims***

New claims 41 and 42 are patentable *at least* by virtue of their dependency.

***Conclusion***

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111  
U.S. Appln. No.: 10/550,540

Attorney Docket No.: Q89566

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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